**Washington Latin PCS**

**English 7 Syllabus**

**Mr. Green and Ms. Peale**

**2014-2015 School Year**

**Contact information:**

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Please contact us with any questions.

Seventh graders’ brains experience rapid change that is unparalleled at almost any other time in their lives. The awakening of new ideas can be spurred by great literature, and the ability to articulate them can be developed through writing and speaking exercises.

Throughout this year, we will help students enhance four skills that will help them succeed inside the classroom and out: reading closely, writing clearly, speaking accurately, and listening carefully. The reading curriculum aims to foster a passion for and comprehension of literature, as well as teach students to examine and evaluate moral issues connected to the stories they read. The writing curriculum aims to teach students to write with engagement, clarity, and mechanical accuracy.

**Reading**

This course will encourage students to read independently as well as expose them to some of the classics of American literature. A portion of every week will be devoted to sustained silent reading, for which students will be expected to have an independent reading book at all times. These books may be borrowed from our classroom library, though students are encouraged to utilize Washington Latin’s excellent librarian, Ms. Hamm, as well as the local library system and bookstores to explore the breadth of literature available to them. We will build students’ vocabulary through new words found in the texts we read, as well as through the study of common Greek and Latin roots. In order to teach students how to fully engage with our class texts, we will place an emphasis on *close reading*, a skill that students will continue to develop over the course of their careers at Latin.

The literature we will read this year is listed below:

* Selected poems and short stories
* *A Raisin in the Sun*
* *To Kill a Mockingbird*
* Essays from NPR’s “This I Believe” project
* Various speeches
* Other readings TBD

**Writing**

The writing curriculum for this course aims to teach the *writer* rather than the *writing* as a means to develop our students as writers. Using the format of a writer’s workshop, students will learn skills and habits they can apply to nearly any writing assignment while also building their voice as writers. Students will spend considerable time on each writing project, producing multiple drafts, followed by a revision and editing process before finally turning in their completed work. The genre will vary for each project, but the first half of the year will focus primarily on creative writing, whereas the second half of the year will focus more on expository and persuasive writing. Grammar, writing conventions, and sentence structure will be taught as a complement to and in conjunction with the students’ writing.

**Speaking/Listening**

Throughout this school year, students will be asked to present information orally and speak publicly as well as listen carefully to their peers. Seminars, partner talks, small and large group discussions, and in-class presentations will all help students practice these skills. We will also introduce our students to NPR’s “StoryCorps” project, which will encourage the students to listen to the stories of other people, connect those stories with the themes of our class, and eventually create a StoryCorps story about their own lives. In addition, we will teach a formal unit focusing on the basic elements of public speaking. This unit will emphasize not only the importance of one’s delivery of a speech, but the power of the words one chooses to use in the speech itself. Students will also learn what can make a speech or speaker great; practice their delivery and style through impromptu speeches; and read, listen to, and analyze various speeches and speakers. This unit will culminate in their outlining, writing, and delivering a speech for the class.

**Grading**

Homework/class assignments 20%

Writing projects 35%

Quizzes/tests 25%

Class preparation/participation 20%

**Late Homework – Daily Assignments and Long-Term Projects**

*Daily homework*

The point of daily homework is to advance a student's learning through independent practice and/or exploration. Homework and classwork are often intertwined and homework provides the catalyst for a day's lesson. We will therefore not accept late homework; students who turn in completed homework on the day it is due (the degree of completion being the province of the teacher) will receive full credit; students who fail to turn in homework on the day it is due will not receive any credit for that daily assignment. Individual teachers will grant exceptions to this policy for illness, significant family events, or anything else a teacher deems worthy of exception.

*Long-term projects*

Because we take seriously our responsibility to teach students how to manage their time and plan for a long-term project, we take a different approach with anything that requires more than one or two days to complete. Students who complete a long-term project on time are eligible to receive full credit; students who hand in a long-term project one day late can receive no better than a B, and students who turn in a long-term project two days late can receive no better than a C. At the end of the two-day period, teachers may decide to give students partial credit for the work they have done on a project or they may decide to give a student a failing grade. Individual teachers will determine any exceptions for illness, significant family events, etc.

Please sign in the space below to indicate your having read the syllabus and understand the expectations therein. Please turn in this signed page to Mr. Green or Ms. Peale, and keep the first page in the ***Class Info*** section of your binder for your reference.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_